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Broadcasters Letter



United States Department of Agriculture • Office of Communications • Washington, DC 20250-1300

Letter No. 2699

February 3, 1995

NEW FOOD SAFETY PROPOSALS -- USDA proposed (January 31) sweeping changes in federal meat and poultry inspection, from a system based primarily on sight, touch and smell to one incorporating scientific testing and systematic prevention of contamination. Acting Secretary Richard Rominger said, "These reforms demonstrate this administration's strong commitment to making meat and poultry safer for consumers." The proposals would require the nation's nearly 6,200 federally inspected meat and poultry slaughter and processing plants to adopt science-based process control systems, called Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP). The HACCP systems would identify potential food safety hazards arising in slaughter and processing plants and build in science-based preventive controls. Food Safety and Inspection Service is the agency responsible for designing and carrying out USDA's food safety program, and will review each plant's records and conduct other in-plant inspection activities. **Contact: Jacque Knight (202) 720-9113.**

'95 FARM PROGRAM SIGN-UP -- The sign-up period for producers wishing to participate in the 1995 commodity production adjustment and price support programs will be January 30 through April 28, at county offices of the USDA's Consolidated Farm Service Agency. Purchase of crop insurance is required for 1995 program participation, and the deadlines for purchasing crop insurance are earlier than program sign-up deadlines. **Contact: Paula Thomasson (202) 254-9344.**

FOODBORNE ILLNESS PREVENTION -- USDA's National Agricultural Library has initiated a new service which provides information on foodborne illness prevention. The new service, called the Foodborne Illness Education Information Center, is designed for educators, trainers and organizations developing education and training materials for food workers and consumers. The center is a joint program of USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service and the Food and Drug Administration. The reports are free and available by modem via the Internet from the gopher of NAL's Food and Nutrition Information Center. **Contact: Brian Norris (301) 504-6778.**

U.S AND CANADIAN JOINT COMMISSION -- The U.S. and Canadian Joint Commission on Grains concluded their third meeting after reviewing fundamental elements of the two countries' grain production and trading systems. James Miller, U.S. Co-chair said, "We continue to make progress towards getting a better understanding of how each of our grain handling systems operate." The Joint Commission reviewed the global economic outlook, and domestic and export programs of both countries. The next meeting of the Joint Commission will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, on February 9-11. **Contact: Wayne Baggett (202) 720-2032.**

POTATO EXPORTS -- Acting Secretary Richard Rominger announced (January 30) that U.S. fresh potatoes and processed potato product exports reached a record high of \$485 million last year, nearly double the \$250 million of just 5 years ago. The potential for fresh potato exports is limited due to restrictive phytosanitary controls in many countries. **Contact: Donald Washington (202) 720-3101.**

END-USE CERTIFICATE REGULATIONS -- The North American Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act requires end-use certificates for wheat and barley imported into the U.S. from any foreign country that requires end-use certificates for imports to the U.S. Gene Moos, under secretary for USDA's Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, announced (January 26) the final regulations governing USDA's end-use certificate program. This program is designed to track the importation of Canadian-produced wheat into the U.S. and its end use. The final rule requires U.S. importers of Canadian-produced wheat to store it separately to preserve its identity as Canadian-produced wheat. Importation of Canadian-produced wheat for purposes of resale is permitted, and the end-use of the wheat is not restricted. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

NONINDIGENOUS SPECIES -- USDA has proposed regulating the importation, interstate movement and release into the environment of nonindigenous organisms. B. Glen Lee, deputy administrator for plant protection and quarantine with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service said, "This action appears necessary because current regulations do not adequately address the introduction of nonindigenous organisms that may have a significant effect on American agriculture and the environment." Because nonindigenous organisms can be used at times to control exotic pest outbreaks in the U.S., the proposed regulations would provide a means of screening them prior to their introduction to determine the potential plant pest risk associated with them. An organism is considered to be nonindigenous if it is beyond its established range. This means that an organism does not have to be from another country to be considered nonindigenous. **Contact: Ed Curlett (301) 436-3256.**

INTENTIONS TO PURCHASE TOBACCO -- U.S. cigarette manufacturers plan to purchase 385 million pounds of 1995-crop burley tobacco, 61 million pounds more than 1994-crop purchase intentions. Major domestic cigarette manufacturers are required by statute to report annually to USDA their intended purchases of burley tobacco from U.S. auction markets and producers, and to report actual purchases at the conclusion of the marketing year. The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, as amended, requires each major cigarette manufacturer to purchase at least 90 percent of its purchase intentions to avoid the assessment of a penalty. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

TOBACCO REFERENDUM RESULTS -- Preliminary results from a mail referendum held January 9-12 indicate flue-cured tobacco growers voted to continue acreage-poundage marketing quotas for their crops for the 1995, 1996, and 1997 marketing years. A vote of at least two-thirds in favor was necessary to continue acreage-poundage marketing quotas, and 98.7% of voting producers voted yes. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

SUGAR LOAN RATES -- The national price-support loan rates for the 1994 crop of domestically grown sugarcane and sugar beets will be 18 cents per pound for raw cane sugar and 23.43 cents per pound for refined beet sugar. **Contact: Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206.**

REVISED RELEASE DATES -- USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service is revising four of its 1995 release dates for the Cotton: World Markets and Trade report. The new release dates for FAS' cotton reports are February 10, March 10, April 11 and December 12. All other FAS circular release dates remain the same. **Contact: Linda Habenstreit (202) 720-9442.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA # 1966 -- Minerals and our health is the topic for this week's edition of Agriculture USA. Brenda Curtis talks with a health expert about the latest research on the impact of minerals on our overall health. (Weekly cassette -- 13-1/2 minute documentary).

CONSUMER TIME # 1447 -- New meat safety program proposed; low fat meat and blood cholesterol; helping hands in California flood; minerals and your health; tracking minority nutrition needs. (Weekly cassette -- consumer features).

AGRITAPE FEATURES # 1958 -- Is it too early to think about spring planting?; California agriculture affected by flood; California agriculture tries to recover; 1994 rice ARP final; dairy outlook. (Weekly cassette -- news features).

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Monday, February 13, feed outlook; oil crops outlook; rice outlook, world ag grain production. Tuesday, February 14, weekly weather and crops; cattle and sheep outlook; farm labor. Wednesday, February 15, ag income and finance. Thursday, February 16, milk production. Friday, February 17, cattle on feed, honey production. Monday, February 21, HOLIDAY. Tuesday, February 21, ag outlook; crop and weather update. Wednesday, February 22, ag trade update; ag exports. Friday, February 24, livestock, dairy and poultry outlooks. Note: The Agricultural Outlook Forum will be held on February 22 and 23, and the USDA Radio Newsline will feature stories from that forum on those days. **These are USDA reports we know about in advance. Our newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545

Material changed at 5 p.m., ET, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

ACTUALITIES -- Acting Secretary of Agriculture Richard Rominger announces food safety regulations. U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Walter F. Mondale, talks about U.S. agricultural exports to the Pacific Rim. Grant Buntrock, CFSA Administrator, talks about sign-up dates and requirements for crop insurance.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- Patrick O'Leary reports from California on USDA and Americorps working together to protect California resources.

SATELLITE COORDINATES FOR TV NEWSFEEDS:

Thursday, 3:45 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET, Galaxy 4, Channel 12 (C-band), audio 6.2 and 6.8, downlink frequency 3940 MHz. Monday, 11:00-11:15 a.m. ET, Telstar 302, Channel 6 (Transponder 3H), (C-band), audio 6.2 and 6.8, downlink frequency 3820 MHz.

Comments and suggestions are welcome regarding USDA broadcast services.

Call Larry A. Quinn, (202) 720-6072; write 1618-S, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-1300.

OFF MIKE

FARM PROFIT '95...is a one-day conference scheduled for Kansas farmers and ranchers on February 15, according to **Kelly Lenz** (WIBW, Topeka, KS). Kelly says his station is organizing the event which will focus on crop insurance reform and the return of El Niño and how it will affect weather patterns. Farmers in his area are showing a lot of uncertainty about what crops to plant this year due to soybean price outlook and higher costs of production for corn. Despite the uncertainty, Kelly says farmers are feeling cautiously optimistic.

CHANGES...in farm program sign-up and crop insurance are key topics for Iowa farmers, says **Lauri Struve** (KGRA, Jefferson, IA) news director and operations manager. Lauri is filling in for farm director **Kathleen Erickson** this week. Lauri notes that they use USDA's radio newslines in reporting farm news four times a day on their station.

ON FARMERS' MINDS...in northeast Arkansas are crop insurance and workers protection standards, reports **James Guthrie** (KFIN-FM, Jonesboro, AR). A 10-year veteran at the station, James voices five shows throughout the day covering farm news and row crops like cotton, rice and soybeans. Arkansas posted record yields in all three of those crops in 1994.

EXPANDED COVERAGE...of farm news and agriculture will result from the boost in power to 25,000 watts for **KSIR** (Fort Morgan, CO), reports **Larry Patrick**, station manager. The station serves northeast Colorado. **Howard Hale** is their farm director.

URBAN GARDENING...feature done recently by our **Gary Crawford** stimulated several calls from listeners of **WHAS** in Louisville, KY, reports **Fred Wiche**. Gary reported on a successful Los Angeles project supported by USDA that inspired response by a Louisville group to renew its efforts for an urban garden project for a particularly troubled inner city area. The group requested a copy of the radio feature to help them get started.



LARRY A. QUINN, Director
Video, Teleconference and Radio Center

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